BPC Petrol Pump, Opp. Bangla Sahib Gurudwara

80. Talkatora Road (Near Udhyan Marg Bus Terminal)

81. Mother Dairy Bihari Market, Kali Bari

82. Chuna Mandi, Paharganj

83. Laddu Ghatti, Paharganj

84. Mother Dairy, Basant Road

85. Mother Dairy, Minto Road, Govt. Press.

86. Rouse Avenue, Main Road (D-5)

87. Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

88. Alipore (West Bengal)

89. Viramgam (Gujarat)

90. Pilar (Goa)

Extinction of Great Indian Bustard

1594. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the great Indian bustard visually found in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is on the verge of extinction;

(b) whether Government have identified the reasons for its extinction; and

(c) if so steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) No, Sir. However, the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) is an endangered species and occurs only in the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

(b) The major threats to the GIB population are habitat deterioration, disturbances due to growth of other animal populations like balack buck and grazing by sheep and changing cropping practices etc.

(c) the steps taken to protect the species and its habitat include:

(i) A network of national park and 6 sanctuaries have been established in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Gujarat which are known habitats of the bird.

(ii) Central assistance is given to the States whenever requested for improved management of these protected areas is received.

(iii) The GIB is included in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby receiving highest legal protection against hunting and commercial exploitation.

(iv) India is signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which regulates the International trade in endangered species. This species is placed in Appendix I of the CITES.

Indo-UK Bilateral Relations

1595. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps have been taken by Government to promote Indo-UK bilateral ties;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether any official level discussions are proposed to be organised in the near future for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Prime Minister paid a visit to UK from 13-16 March 1994, the first Prime Ministerial visit from India since 1985. The visit marked a new era of relations between India and the UK, reinforcing trends towards a long term partnership based on mutual confidence and trust, shared values and mutual benefits. Prime Minister's interaction with British leaders provided basis for a broad consensus in

the UK on the importance of relations with India. A Biilateral Investment Protection Agreement was concluded with the UK during the visit, the first signed by India with any country, giving a further boost to economic relations and investments.

Prime Minister met his British counterpart Mr. John Major again in New York during the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session in October 1995 during which he discussed bilateral, regional and international matters of mutual interest.

External Affaris Minister met the then British Foreign Secretary in May 1995, during his visit to the UK for the VE Day Commemorative Events. He met his current counterpart, Mr. Malcolm Rifkind at the UNGA Session in New York in September 1995 and once again in November 1995 when he paid an offical visit to the UK. External Affairs Minister also met the British Ministers of Defence and Home Affaris. In addition, he met leaders of the opposition parties. In all his meetings, External Affairs Minister was able to discuss bilateral issues and ways and means of further strengthening Indo-UK bilateral ties. He was also able to convey to the British leadership India's views on matters of vital concern to us.

Over the past two years, a number of British Ministers representing their specific areas of responsibility have visited India and held meetings with their counterparts and other dignitaries in India. Similarly, a number of Ministers from India representing sectors such as Finance, Home Affairs, Surface Transport, Environment and Forests, Power, Civil Aviation & Tourism, Human Resources Development also visited the UK and held meetings with their British Counterparts.

At the official level, eight rounds of Foreign Secretary level talks have been held so far, the most recent of which was in September 1995 during the visit of the British Permanent Under Secretary of State to India.

India and UK have also established a Defence Consultative Group with the objective of strengthening bilateral cooperation in the defence field. The first meeting of the Group took place in May 1995 in London.

Regular exchanges of views will continue with the UK at various levels.

Inviting International Bids to Survey the Hydro-Carbon Reserves

1596. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the process of inviting international bids for speculative survey round for 20 blocks of proven Hydro-carbon reserves has been delayed and final bid dates extended further;

(b) whether Government have failed to provide bidders with relevant data/ information and data on local/regional geology as assured in the bid invitation; and

(c) whether Government are confident to provide the docket containing relevant data to prospective bidders by the extended date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The last date for submission of bids for the Joint Venture speculative survey round has been extended to 15th December, 1995 at the request of the prospective bidders to enable them to study the relevant data/ information. The basin dockets containing relevant data are being provided to bidders for inspection well before the close bidding.